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Director of Central Intelligence

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ARGENTINA: Opposition to Viola

3.3(b)(1)

Viola faces serious, perhaps even insurmountable, opposition, but his removal probably is not imminent. Discontent with Viola centers on his government's ineffectual efforts to restore stability to the economy.

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Two large devaluations of the peso and other economic measures have failed to inspire confidence in the private sector, the general public, and most important, the ruling military. There is a growing belief that cabinet ministers are now so preoccupied with economic problems that the government has become immobilized.

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Viola and the three-man military junta with whom he shares power have denied publicly rumors of a rift, but stories persist that Army Commander Galtieri is spearheading an effort to unseat the President.

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The Argentine military traditionally has been reluctant to act against legitimate authority--it debated for many months before overthrowing the inept government of President Estella Peron in 1976. Moreover, the ouster of Viola would imply a serious breakdown of military unity, which has been the hallmark of military rule.

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